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ABSTRACT

The attempt to unite theory and practice in the education of English teachers has taken many forms: courses in which theoreticians attempt to illuminate the practice of professional teachers or student teachers; situations in which teacher-education faculty cooperate with teachers, student teachers, and the community, in order to make programs more responsive to community needs; and instruction in which school-based apprenticeship is stressed. Until research can provide a firm base for the structure and content of methods courses, professionals must rely on their own judgment as to the placement of emphasis. An adaptation of Lee J. Cronbach's research paradigm, used at the University of Northern Iowa, Cedar Falls, maximizes the transfer of educational theory into teaching practice. English education majors, exposed to the practical experience of student teaching, are also provided with the opportunity to discuss the teaching encounter on a theoretical level, within a classroom setting. Plans for a future course, which will combine the disciplines of English education and educational psychology, are also outlined. (KS)

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THERE'S NOTHING NEW UNDER THE SUN*

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by

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In many senses, there is nothing new under the sun as far as the problems of teacher education are concerned. We are still trying to prepare teachers who will become lifelong pursuers of knowledge, the goal Socrates saw as the main purpose of formal education. We are still concerned in English Methods classes with developing teachers who can cope with individual differences as Quintilian thought necessary in the Rome of 95 A.D.:

> A teacher ought, therefore, to be as agreeable as possible... he ought to praise some parts of his pupils' performances, to tolerate some, and to alter others, giving his reasons why the alterations are made....Different ages, however, are to be corrected in different ways, and work is to be required and amended according to the degree of the pupil's abilities.[1]

Today those of us in English Education are still trying to maximize the transfer of theories as old as our earliest civilizations into current, effective practice. We have all had the experience of wondering what went wrong when one of our brightest student theoreticians turned out to be an ineffective and ineffectual practitioner. On the other hand, we have all seen the practitioner who is a competent craftsman in the classroom but is not a professional as defined by Harry Broudy - "...professional means [distinct from craftsman] theory-guided practice with the practitioner

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[1]Marcus Fabius Quintilianus, On the Early Education of the Citizen-Orator, Book I and Book II, Chapters One through Ten. Translated by Reverend John Selby Watson, Edited with an introduction and notes by James J. Murphy. (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill and Co., Ind., 1965), p. 100 f.

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possessing both the how and the why of the practice."[2]

Robert J. Schaefer, former Dean of Teachers College, Columbia University, has stated Broudy's position in another way, urging the development of certain schools as Centers of Inquiry where scholarly practitioners and practicing scholars work together to educate the professional teacher.[3] Schaefer's plan calls for close cooperation and interchange of personnel between the schools and universities which are engaged in research and teaching in the field of pedagogy.

In recent years, Teacher Education Centers have been developed which resemble the Schaefer model, as does the new Stanford Teacher Education Program made up of 13 Stanford faculty members or senior professionals, 11 doctoral candidates and four bilingual teaching interns. The interns will spend 60% of their time for two years working at Herbert Hoover Junior High School in San Jose.

All the Stanford personnel -- faculty members, doctoral candidates, and the Spanish and English speaking interns -- will work with teachers and community members in identifying school problems, reviewing relevant research, and conducting local studies. The team will adopt and assess courses of action suggested by their studies and subsequently will summarize the results for other schools and communities. Funded by a $290,000 grant from the Teacher Corps of the U.S. Office of Education, the experiment will attempt to make the high school's educational program more responsive to students, teachers, and the community. Most of us, unlike Stanford, will have to

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[2]As quoted in Robert J. Menges, "Assessing Readiness for Professional Practice," Review of Educational Research, Vol. 45, No. 2 (Spring, 1975), p. 195.

[3]Robert J. Schaefer, The School As a Center of Inquiry (New York: Harper and Row, 1967).

determine what we can profitably do on a much more limited budget. But do something, we must or face erosion of our teacher training programs.

Spillane and Levenson support school-controlled rather than college-controlled teacher education. They believe that "for many colleges teacher education is merely the easiest and cheapest of professional schools to establish, and the bad schools have devalued the good."[4] They state somewhat militantly in a recent Phi Delta Kappan article that the role of the college is to provide a general or liberal education but "the place to learn to be a teacher is in the school. The people who can tell the novice about the real world of the school are the experienced teachers, administrators, counselors, and custodians -- those on the spot involved with the daily problems."[5]

A real danger in such a school-based, apprenticeship kind of professional training is the ease with which theory may be overlooked, just as today's college-based professional education has often overlooked transfer of theory into practice. James Popham at the University of California at Berkeley found little practical application of theory when he gave a learning objective to groups of teachers, housewives, garage mechanics, and TV repairmen and asked them to teach the objective to a group of students who were then tested on their attainment of the specified objective. Students who were taught by experienced teachers, presumably trained in a college-based program, did not do better than those taught by the untrained housewives, mechanics, and repairmen.[6]

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[4]Robert R. Spillane and Dorothy Levenson, "Teacher Training: A Question of Control, Not Content," Phi Delta Kappan. Vol. 57, (March, 1976), p. 436.

[5]Spillane and Levenson, op. cit., p. 438.

[6]W. James Popham, "Measurement That Makes a Difference," Speech delivered at Elementary Education Conference, University of Northern Iowa, Cedar Fall, Iowa, Sept. 21, 1974.

Popham has found, however, that college students who teach a video-taped mini-lesson, analyze it, reteach and retape it with a second group raise their students' scores on tests measuring how well the objective was learned or achieved. The question that needs to be asked here is, "Does such measurement of student achievement alone evaluate the teaching act completely?"

One of the innovative techniques of the Far West Regional Lab is the manner in which the researchers teach specific behaviors, e.g., higher-level questioning techniques. Teachers read material on questioning, view model video tapes, and then attempt to approximate the behavior of the teacher on the tape in their own video-taped performance. Follow ups, after three years, found "teacher performance still superior to pretraining performances on eight out of the ten skills scored."[7] But even here, there's a catch. One of the skills taught by the Far West's Minicourse I is to repeat student answers less often; on the other hand, Flanders' Interaction Analysis assesses more teacher repetition of student answers as desirable. Which is the best under what circumstances? These are questions research must answer.

Research must tell us more about the probability of teacher success based on personality characteristics, knowledge of subject matter, application of subject matter, and performance on the job. It also must investigate the ultimate criterion of teacher effectiveness (career-long effectiveness), the criterion of intermediate effectiveness (effectiveness after ten years of teaching) and the criterion for immediate effectiveness (effectiveness upon graduation).[8]

Until such research can give us a firmer base for our methods courses and their relation to field experience, we will have to rely on our judgment of

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[7]Menges, op. cit., p. 199.

[8]Menges, op. cit., pp. 173-175.

what and how to teach from our knowledge of past studies. This means that in spite of the stress that a number of professional organizations and institutions are placing [9] on field experience, we cannot put our faith in school-based internships alone, where untheoretical "craftsmen" supervise the inexperienced teacher in a way that tends, as Carl Rogers describes it, to "freeze the profession in a past image."[10] We also clearly cannot put all our eggs in the basket of abstract theory and general principles.

In the interim, perhaps in our methods classes we would do well to use as our model for the analysis of the teaching act my adaptation of Lee Cronbach's paradigm[11]:

> Subject matter of this nature
> with methodology of this type,
> in this amount,
> produces this pattern of response
> in students at this level of development,
> with this level of experience, and
> with this kind of background.

Since constraints at my University do not permit me to utilize fully the practicing scholar-scholarly practitioner model with its interchange of and close cooperation between college and school personnel and with its equal stress on theory and practice, I have in the last three years modified my pre-service and pre-student teaching methods courses in an attempt to maximize the transfer of theory into practice by analyzing the teaching act according to my adaptation of Cronbach.

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[9] Roy A. Edelfelt, "Innovative Ideas in Student Teaching," Reprinted from The Role of the State Educational Agency in the Development of Innovative Programs in Student Teaching (Baltimore: Maryland, State Department of Education, April, 1969).

[10] As quoted by Menges, op. cit., p. 191.

[11] Lee J. Cronbach, "The Logic of Experiments on Discovery," (Stanford University, 1965), p. 2. (mimeographed.)

When methods of instruction are discussed, we vary the components of the paradigm and try to analyze how the changes will affect our hypothetical students. For example, in teaching Romeo and Juliet (subject matter) through a film (methodology) which has been cut to the main scenes (in this amount) the teacher can expect high motivation and good cognitive and affective response from ninth graders, who have read no Shakespeare, but who have a substantial interest and background in reading, and who come from high socio-economic-cultural backgrounds. Now if we change any of the components of the paradigm - e.g., methodology or amount - from a cut film to an uncut or complete film, or from viewing an uncut film to reading the uncut play, the teacher will get a different response. The teacher will also get a different response if the students are 12th graders, or if they are students who have had limited reading experience.

In my classes we also try to apply the paradigm to my college students' mini-lessons which are video-taped and which include a behavioral objective which is evaluated by the laboratory school students' scores on a post-teaching measure.

In spite of these changes in the "Teaching of English" course, when our majors do their student teaching, they are rapidly socialized into the school system to which they are assigned. Often, this results in bland acceptance of their supposed success with no attempt to measure their high school students' cognitive or affective learning because their in-school supervising teachers do not see the need or do not know what to do in this respect. If a teacher never evaluate whether he or she is actually teaching what is purportedly being taught, then he or she can blithely assume success and there will be no unpleasant facts to face, no wondering why a mechanic might get as good results with the students he teaches as the results a regular teacher gets.

In an attempt to counteract this socialization that leads to believing what one wants to believe, I instituted an experimental, elective, intensive, one-week, one-credit course immediately following student teaching. The week the students return from student teaching they meet every night from 7:00 p.m. until 10:00 p.m. and all day Saturday to analyze their experiences. Furnishing the subject matter in the form of successes, failures, lesson plans, questions, curriculum designs, evaluation forms, and case studies, the college students come back fired up to learn after having gone through the rites of passage that constitute student teaching.

The course has proved very popular (two-thirds of those eligible enroll) and somewhat sobering for a number of returning student teachers. I have not yet done a follow-up study on these students to see if their inoculation has immunized them from the disease of it-must-be-OK-because-everyone-else-is-doing-it; but I am sure it can not immunize completely without further booster shots of study and research with true professionals; it cannot immunize without a conviction that no one becomes a good teacher overnight; he or she must investigate and learn for a lifetime.

At least my students may have a better chance of remaining critical and analytical with the help of the Seminar than without it, if we can judge by some of their written anonymous comments:

> I see three reasons for making some form of Seminar for Student Teachers a permanent course. In the first place, such a course provides a review of methods, strategies, tactics, and principles learned in methods course. I found that I had remembered only vague and general principles from Teaching of English while forgetting specific strategies and tactics. Secondly, a seminar such as this one provides an arena for the discussion of common experiences among the student teachers. And finally, the seminar provides a motivation (!!) to do better next time.
>
> This course has helped me to look more objectively at the type of teaching I did during student teaching.

> Through listening to the other class members, I felt as if my own exposure was increased to the problems encountered in the classroom. The course taught me how to analyze objectively my teaching and look for ways to improve myself as a teacher.
>
> I found that coming back to this seminar has strengthened my desire and determination to introduce new methods and ideas. Having actual situations in mind helps make any suggestions given in such a class as this much more concrete. Without this chance to hash things over, student teaching could be a very lonely experience.
>
> Because of the small size of the class, we were able to discuss our problems and questions in a personal way. Much time was spent considering the individual problems of each student teacher; this helped us gain a more positive attitude towards teaching and greater insights into handling the problems we encountered. Possibly the greatest value of the class was its open-ended format.

In addition to the student teachers' comprehending better what they have just experienced, I think the Seminar has had an added benefit I hadn't counted on. Note in the last two comments the reference to possible loneliness of the student teaching experience, i.e., alienation, and also note the reference to discussing questions in a "personal way." It is possible that this post-student teaching course is serving the purpose of helping students resolve self-adequacy concerns that Frances E. Fuller found to be overwhelming.[12]

She discovered that inexperienced teachers were so intensely concerned with self-adequacy that were unable to think about their students or the principles of learning. This situation, she found, might last for as long as two years for the beginning teacher; her hypothesis was that more sophisticated concerns will appear only after early concerns about "where I stand" and "classroom control" are resolved.

In her experiment one group of 24 student teachers took the English Methods course and met every two weeks with four supervisors at informal luncheons

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[12]Frances E. Fuller, "Concerns of Teachers: A Developmental Conceptualization," AERA Journal, Vol. 6, No. 2 (March, 1969), pp. 207-226.

where they discussed current concerns. Twenty-two students expressed concerns about "where I stand" and "classroom control." Six expressed concerns in both categories and one student had concerns only about classroom control. None asked, "Are the students learning?"

Another group in the study substituted for a weekly seminar a taped group counseling session at which the supervisor was not present. A psychologist met with six or eight student teachers in these sessions where during the first three weeks the college students were concerned with questions of self-adequacy alone. Only later did attention to their students' problems and learning difficulties appear.

I think Fuller's study points the way to much fruitful innovation, and I wonder if part of the success of the post-student teaching seminar does not result from its therapeutic aspect; students are able to resolve some self-adequacy questions and move toward discussion of learning theory.

In closing, I would like to tell you about the experimental course I have planned for next fall with one of the educational psychology professors on our campus. It is an attempt to bring theory and practice closer together in the pre-student teaching Methods course. Whereas in most educational psychology classes there is a mixture of majors from all different fields, in the fall of 1976 an educational psychology professor and I will teach a combined methods-ed psych course for English majors only. The major part of the course, as we visualize it, will be the presentation of principles of learning and the immediate pragmatic application of them to reading, writing, speaking, and listening.

For example, one principle upon which different schools of psychology seem to agree is that what motivates one student may not necessarily motivate another. After discussing the various implications and theories of motivation, students will be asked to create motivational techniques for different situations utilizing the Cronbach paradigm. We hope the students will benefit greatly from having

two professors, one from psychology and one from English, analyze their video tapes with them after they have first seen them alone and analyzed the tapes for themselves. At the present time, I am the only one who aids them in the examination of their tapes or who guides them post the inconsequential observation about the use of the word "kids" to the more crucial questions of suitability of material.

My goal in this sequence of methods courses is to progress logically from knowledge of theory to application in an ever more sophisticated manner from a pre-student teaching combined course in methods and educational psychology to the field experience, and then to a post-student teaching analysis of that field experience.

Although the idéa of attempting to evaluate what we are doing in English Education is nothing new, perhaps the method of doing so can be improved and changed to include some new elements. Such evaluation can help give a day in the sun to the idea that it is wise to recognize when the Emperor is naked and when he truly is wearing elegant garments.